



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Health Officials Recommend Parents Check Their Children's Vaccine Records To See if Booster Dose of Hib Vaccine Is Needed.

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health wants parents to know about a change in recommendations for *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) vaccine.

Because of production shortages in recent years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) previously had recommended that health-care providers defer the routine Hib vaccine booster dose. In a change effective immediately, the CDC now recommends that children ages 1 year through 4 years (before their fifth birthday) who did not receive a booster dose for Hib because of the shortage should now receive a booster. The booster dose of Hib vaccine is usually given at 12 to 18 months of age. A complete series of Hib vaccine is either three or four doses, depending on the type used. Parents of children younger than 5 should contact their child's health-care provider or local public health unit to determine if their child requires a booster dose.

“Hib disease is a serious infection caused by a bacteria. Children can get Hib disease by being around other children or adults who may have the bacteria and not know it,” said Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager. “If the bacteria spreads into the lungs or bloodstream, Hib can cause serious problems. Before Hib vaccine, Hib disease was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis among children younger than 5.”

Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings that can lead to lasting brain damage and deafness. Hib disease also can cause pneumonia; severe swelling of the throat; and infection of the blood, joints, bones and covering of the heart. It also can lead to death.

Since Hib vaccines were introduced, the incidence of invasive Hib disease in infants and children in the U.S. has decreased by 99 percent. Hib is one of only two vaccines that are more effective

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at providing immunity than natural infection is; the other is tetanus vaccine. Although the Hib vaccine prevents only one form of meningitis, it has nearly eliminated what was once the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in infants and children in the United States.

For more information about the reinstatement of the Hib booster dose, contact Molly Sander, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

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